

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2425
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: TRANSVAAL PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY CONGRESS
THIS WEEK

1. PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY (PFP) SOURCES

HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE FRANCHISE QUESTION IS EXPECTED TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE DEBATED IN THE TRANSVAAL PFP CONGRESS WHICH TAKES PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 8 AND 9 IN PRETORIA. THE PFP TRANSVAAL CHAIRMAN, PIET VERMEULEN, TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE PARTY'S VAN ZYL SLABBERT COMMISSION CHARGED WITH REVIEWING THE PFP'S CONSTITUTIONAL POLICY IS EXPECTED TO MAKE ITS OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FRANCHISE QUESTION TO THE NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS IN NOVEMBER, BUT THE CAPE AND NATAL CONGRESSES AS WELL AS THE PFP NATIONAL YOUTH CONCIL HAVE ALREADY URGED ACCEPTANCE OF AN EQUAL VOTE FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS.

2. THE YOUTH COUNCIL RESOLUTION ASKS THE SLABBERT COMMITTEE

TO CONSIDER "A CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM IN WHICH EVERY PERSON HAS AN EQUAL VOTE IN A NON-ETHNIC FEDERAL

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SYSTEM." YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, IAN DAVIDSON, WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT THE COUNCIL AVOIDED DESCRIBING ITS POSITION AS "ONE MAN, ONE VOTE" BECAUSE "THE TERM IS TOO EMOTIVE AND IGNORES THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM IN WHICH WE WOULD LIKE IT TO BE CARRIED OUT."

3. IN RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION, HARRY

SCHWARZ, MP AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY'S FEDERAL EXECUTIVE, REPORTEDLY PLEDGED CONTINUED PFP SUPPORT FOR A QUALIFIED FRANCHISE AND WAS SAID TO HAVE LINKED HIS REJECTION OF EQUAL FRANCISE TO "THE SURVIVAL OF THE WHITE MAN." HE WAS QUOTED AS STATING HE BELIEVED IN "CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY," A CONFEDERATION IN WHICH ALL PARTICIPATING GROUPS WOULD HAVE A RIGHT OF VETO OVER DECISIONS TAKEN.

4. VERMEULEN DESCRIBED THESE DIFFERENENCES AS "HEALTHY DEBATE WITHIN THE PARTY." MORE OF THE SAME APPARENTLY WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER9 WHEN THE FRANCHISE QUESTION IS DISCUSSED. ONE NEWSPAPER REPORTED THE CONGRESS WOULD LIKELY PROVIDE THE MOST OPEN DEBATE YET ON THE UNQUALIFIED FRANCHISE QUESTION. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, AT LEAST EIGHT DELEGATIONS WILL ASK THAT THE PARTY COMMIT ITSELF TO UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE WHILE FIVE OTHERS WILL REJECT THE IDEA OUTRIGHT. TWO REPORTED RESOLUTIONS INCLUDE ONE WHICH WOULD CALL ON THE PFP TO ELIMINATE ALL REFERENCES TO GROUP RIGHTS FROM ITS POLICY, AND ANOTHER WHICH WANTS FULL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GROUP IDENTITY.

5. EMBASSY POLOFFS WILL BE ATTENDING THE CONGRESS SEPTEMBER 9 AS INVITED OBSERVERS.

EDMONDSON

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Message Attributes

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